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in the section called "Dixie Drolleries" suggests the sort of verse Dean Swift might have written in his dotage.

And yet, when all these disagreeable truths have been said, the fact remains that Mr. Dargan exhibits in the better part of his work considerable reading, spirit, and individuality. He sings to his critics:—

> Know then, ye inksters, and such have you placed,
> At once themselves and reason so disgraced,
> We dare your scorn; unto the combat come—
> Behold! a Rebel that dares beat the drum.

The inkster who writes this review cannot parse the first two lines, but he understands the other two, and wishes the Rebel all success and an improved technique in his chosen instrument. With the horns of elf-land as faintly blowing as they are at present, there is an excellent chance for drum and fife music.

L. WARDLAW MILES.

O PIONEERS! By Willa Sibert Cather. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

If the great Middle West has ceased to be a field for the novelist in tales of Indian adventure and cowboy daring, it still contains fruitful subjects for the pen of the writer with sympathy and insight who, in the westward movement of the great hordes of foreign immigrants, can discover material as romantic and as historically valuable as that recorded in Cooper's *Prairie* and Irving's *Astoria*. In this romance of the modern West by Miss Cather the author has broken new ground and reveals herself as a writer with insight into character, narrative skill, descriptive power, sense of proportion, and charm of style. In a few briefly and vividly sketched scenes revealed through the eye and heart of one that knows and loves the region, the writer makes us feel the atmosphere of the vast prairie and interprets it to us through its effect on the characters. There is no torturing of words, no forcing of the mood; all is done without conscious effort and with artistic restraint and reserve. The story deals with that medley of Scandinavian, Bohemian, German, and French immigrants who, with no experience in farming, crowded to the

western prairies in the early seventies and sought to wring a livelihood from a reluctant soil. Each racial type is clearly depicted with its special customs and views of life, and the earlier generation is contrasted with the later,—the American in the making. The characters, however, are more than mere types; they are individuals who grow, and whose contrasted temperaments and training lead inevitably to a conflict in which the woman is the victor, triumphing by virtue of her superior common sense, her stronger will, her clearer vision, her greater courage, her firmer faith in the future of the country. Thus subtly the feminist theme is made prominent at the expense of the men, who are all singularly devoid of strength and initiative. As a consequence, the chief point of weakness in the story is that Carl, the lover of Alexandra, notwithstanding his self-abnegation, fails in the end to render himself altogether worthy of such a splendid woman, who in spite of herself has to do most of the wooing.

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SIDNEY LANIER AT ROCKINGHAM SPRINGS. A new chapter in American Letters. By John W. Wayland, Ph.D. Dayton, Va.: The Ruebush-Elkins Company. 1912.

In this little volume Professor Wayland has brought together some interesting facts, not hitherto recorded, about Lanier's visit to Rockingham Springs, near Staunton, Virginia, in the summer of 1879. It was during this summer that Lanier prepared for the press his *Science of English Verse*. Dr. Wayland, with the aid of letters from Mrs. Lanier and the owner of the cottage at which the Laniers stayed, succeeded in making a pretty detailed account of the poet's life at this time. We learn, among other things, about Lanier's habits of composition, his interest in the social life of the neighborhood, his delight in horse-back riding, and his fondness for flute-playing by night. Photographs are given of the room in which the poet wrote and of the Lanier cottage and its environments. A clipping from a local newspaper tells of Lanier's presence at a tournament on August 8, 1879, on which occasion he delivered the charge to the Knights—"an eloquent and appropriate address." The